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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2009

Media Highlights: Sudan's Bashir Cancels Visit-Turkish Commentators Criticize Government; Iran: IAEA Offer; Amb. Jeffrey Comments on Turkey's Democratic initiative and Iran; PM Erdogan with Journalists; Alevis Rally in Istanbul

"Good News: Bashir is not Coming" (Radikal) - OIC's COMCEC Meeting Continues in Istanbul  
All papers extensively cover the developments after Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir cancelled his visit to Istanbul to attend the ongoing the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meetings. A commentary in today's Milliyet says that Ankara used "special channels" to tell Bashir that Turkish prosecutors might issue an arrest warrant on his arrival in Turkey. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak comments that Bashir cancelled his visit to Istanbul out of "consideration" to relieve the Turkish government in the face of pressures over the Sudanese president's visit. "Good News: Bashir is not Coming," reads a front page headline in Monday's Radikal. The paper guesses the OIC might have asked Bashir to not go to Turkey. Papers report Bashir phoned President Gul and said he would not be able to come to Turkey because of "internal problems" at home. Saturday papers have reported Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon voiced hopes that the messages to be given to Bashir in Istanbul would be "parallel to the message issued by the EU and the US." Papers also quote Prime Minister Erdogan as saying Sunday he saw no evidence of genocide in Darfur, and adding that "a Muslim cannot do such things."

Editorials on al-Bashir

Ahmet Hakan in mainstream Hurriyet criticized the words PM Erdogan used to defend Sudanese leader Bashir "A Muslim cannot commit genocide." Instead of "cannot" Erdogan should say "should not." We have many examples that Muslims commit genocide and massacre. Muslim leaders committed massacre in Syria's Hana town and in Iraq's Halepce town. If a person is cruel, no matter which religion he belongs to, it should be our duty to scream to his face that he is cruel."

Ferai Tinc in mainstream Hurriyet believes that the timing of Erdogan's defending Bashir was very wrong. She said "Erdogan's

words did not match with the EU's foreign policies. Nothing will change after this hour even if Bashir doesn't come. Because the list of "Ankara's friends" is already being distributed around."

Mehmet Tezkan in mainstream Milliyet questions whether a Muslim actor in leading role of a massacre makes the whole massacre legal?

Semih Idiz in Milliyet believes that it is a very positive development that Bashir is not coming to Turkey. But, it wasn't easy to reach this position. And, at the end, Turkey reached a position that it bows to the pressure. Moreover, Erdogan defending Bashir right after Ahmedinejad, will definitely incite the debates regarding "solidarity between Mujahidin."

Okay Gonensin in mainstream Vatan criticizes Erdogan's stance regarding Bashir and says "someone should explain to the Prime Minister the gravity of his words regarding the Muslims not committing massacre. If a person can say this, that means his first criteria in evaluating the people is definitely the religion. It is really very sad for the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey to defend a murderer dictator like Bashir. And, I cannot make any further comments for a defense that is based on religion!"

Riza Turmen in Milliyet explained the legal side of Turkey's responsibility on Bashir's arrest decision. Turmen said "Turkey did not sign the Rome agreement which issued an arrest warrant for Bashir. That is why when the US and the EU warned Turkey to arrest Bashir and hand him to ICC, Turkey said the ICC decision is not binding for Turkey. However, there is article 1593 of UN Security Council decision which orders all countries, whether signatory of

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the Rome agreement or not, to be in full cooperation with the ICC decisions. Therefore, Turkey's responsibility in this case doesn't rely on the ICC decision but relies on the UN Security Council decision."

IRAN: Nuclear Material to Turkey?

Leftist Nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Surprise Proposal from IAEA" that Muhammad al-Baradei said Iran could store enriched uranium in Turkey until Russia provides it with nuclear fuel. All media, including TV, reporting that Iran has yet again turned down the IAEA offer that Iran ship its enriched uranium to neighboring Turkey as a way to ease U.S. and European concern over its nuclear ambitions.

Ambassador Jeffrey: Turkey's 'Democratic Initiative' Not a US Plan; US Perspective on Iran

Mainstream, pro-government Star and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carry excerpts from Ambassador James Jeffrey's statements in a one-on-one with the bureau chief of the Islamist-oriented television channel Kanal 7 TV on Sunday. In "According to Our Vietnam Experience -- Military Success Is Not Enough," Star emphasized that Ambassador Jeffrey said on the Turkish government's Kurdish "Democratic Initiative" the experiences from the wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq showed military success was important, but had to be coupled with economic, cultural and diplomatic measures. Jeffrey said the "Initiative" was not a US plan. "Turkey is a big and independent country, we only provide support now and then," he stated. On a question whether the relationship between Turkey and Iran discomfited the US, Jeffrey said "We are not bothered, but expect Turkey-Iran ties to proceed within the framework of the UN decisions, and in line with them."

Erdogan: No Confidence Problem with Military

All media outlets report Prime Minister Erdogan came together with journalists in a televised "question and answer" session Sunday night. Erdogan said there was no "problem of confidence" between the AK Party government and the military over alleged plans to oust the governing party. "We have been in a positive process with the military over the past seven years," emphasized Erdogan. Erdogan also said his government's Kurdish "Democratic Initiative" would be debated in the parliament this week, and strongly criticized the opposition parties' stance on the matter. Erdogan stressed he "deemed important" his upcoming December 7 visit to the US. "There are issues we have to handle jointly. It is said that the US would

exit from Iraq in 2011, but such a decision would be too early and wrong," said Erdogan.

Alevis Come Together in Mass Rally in Istanbul  
Liberal Radikal reports that on Sunday, hundreds of thousands of Alevis came together in a "historic" rally held in Istanbul to voice expectations and demands from the government. The Alevis demand legal status for their prayer houses (Cemevi,) prevention of construction of mosques in Alevi villages, annulment of compulsory religious education, abolishment of the religious affairs directorate, Diyanet, and a new constitution. Radikal says at least 250,000 participated in the rally whereas Cumhuriyet puts the figure as 500,000 and police records as 40,000.

#### Upcoming events:

Q November 9: President Gul will join the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC) held in Istanbul.

Q November 9: In Istanbul, Gul will hold an informal meeting with Afghanistan and its neighbors.

Q November 9: Prime Minister Erdogan will meet with Dr. Aras Konjhodzic, the head of the Balkan American Federation.

Q November 10: The government will take its Kurdish "democratic initiative" to the parliament for debate.

Q November 11-12: Afghanistan Reconstruction Summit will be held in Istanbul.

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#### TV News (NTV)

##### Domestic

Q Opposition MHP leader Devlet Bahceli is reelected party chairman at a convention held Sunday.

Q CHP MP Kemal Kilicdaroglu says the situation in Turkey can be described as "covert fascism" because there is no independence of the judiciary in Turkey.

Q Labor unions plan to go on strike on November 25.

Q The Turkish Consumers' Rights Association has issued a call for the boycott of genetically modified products.

Q An IMF report says Turkey was one of the few countries to report growth in the last quarter of 2009.

##### World

Q Iranian President Ahmadinejad has arrived in Istanbul to participate in the OIC meetings. On Sunday, Ahmadinejad met with President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan.

Q Syrian leader Bashar Assad said Syrian-heritage militants within the PKK would not be arrested if they return to their country.

Q Bulgaria's President, Georgi Parvanov has refused to sign the decree on the recall of Bulgaria ambassadors to Turkey and the US, despite the proposal of the Cabinet.

JEFFREY